

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 15, 23 and 24 are all the claims pending in the application. By way of this Amendment, Applicants cancel claim 26.

The rejection of claim 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph is now moot due to the cancellation of claim 26.

Claim 26 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Plows et al. (4,075,974).

Claim 26 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 11-195250 A.

Claim 26 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Decre (US 2001/0018093).

The prior art rejections of claim 26 are now moot due to the cancellation of claim 26.

Claims 1-3, 15, 23, 24 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Decre (US 2001/0018093).

Claims 4 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Decre (US 2001/0018093) and further in view of JP 11-195250 A.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Decre (US 2001/0018093) in view of Plows et al. (4,075,974).

Applicants perfect their claim to priority under § 119 by submitting herewith verified English translations of both Japanese application documents (JP 2000-377405 and JP 2000-377406) from which the pending application claims priority.

The Japanese priority documents were filed on December 12, 2000, which is before the U.S. filing date of Decre (January 31, 2001). Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
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effective filing date of the pending application antedates the filing date of Decre, and therefore, Decre should be removed as prior art.

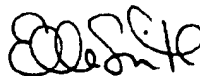
The remaining cited prior art references fail to teach or suggest all the features of the remaining pending claims. Thus, the § 102(e) rejections based on Decre, as well as the § 103(a) rejections based on Decre in view of JP 11-195250, and Decre in view of US 4,075,974, should be withdrawn accordingly.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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